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Rep. Wright is grim in look at Nicaragua

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A key Democratic member of the Kissinger commission has given a grim assessment of Central America, saying Nicaragua continues to export aid to leftist insurgents in countries crippled with debt, hunger and growing numbers of refugees.

House Majority Leader James Wright, D-Texas, added that totalitarian trends in Nicaragua "may have passed the point of no return" to political pluralism, according to reports given him and the other 11 members of the commission that spent last week visiting six countries in the region.

Wright said the democratic goals of Nicaragua's 1979 revolution are disappearing in an evolving police state where there "are government spies on every city block," weapons are stockpiled and people are drafted into the military.

Meanwhile, a senior U.S. official briefing reporters on Undersecretary of State Langhorne Motley's meeting with Nicaraguan leaders last week, said yesterday he believed it was possible the Managua government and its neighbors to eventually work out a peace agreement.

"I think it is very tough but, yes, I think it is a possibility," the official said.

The official said Motley's visit "wasn't any breakthrough — nor was it a slam of the door in the face."

Two goals of the Reagan administration's military buildup in the region, which includes covert aid to forces trying to topple the Sandinistas, are to force the Nicaraguans to move to a more open society and stop their aid to leftists in El Salvador, Honduras and other countries.

But Wright said the flow of leftist aid is "continuing according to all the reports we got." The membership of the commission is bipartisan and during the tour they were briefed by high-level

government officials in each country they visited. Wright, who said he has visited the region more than 30 times, is among the first to publicly relate his perceptions from the trip.

Wright said the flow of refugees from Nicaragua is growing, and that a Panamanian intelligence official told him they suspect that as many as 30 of every 100 refugees in their country may be Nicaraguan agents.

He also said Nicaragua was getting substantial war materials from Libya and not just Cuba. He said he saw Spanish language textbooks, used by Cuban teachers, that have the "vitriolic type" of anti-Americanism.

Wright said he discerned a "remarkable degree of unity" among the commission members who are scheduled to report to President Reagan in January with long-range policy recommendations for U.S. relations with Latin America. He declined to characterize what consensus was developing but he and Henry Kissinger, commission chairman, have called for a mix of economic and security measures.

"I believe an increase in economic aid can make an enormous difference and almost certainly will be recommended by our commission," said Kissinger, the former secretary of state, in an early morning interview yesterday.

But later, speaking to a group of financial analysts, Kissinger added, "It is safe to say you cannot solve a guerrilla war by economic programs alone."

While the economic programs "can show a vision of a better future and a prospect that the status quo will be changed." he said, "at the same time there has to be a security program.

"How to bring these two things together is the big problem of our foreign policy and one of the problems we will deal with in our report," he said.

Wright said enormous debt has put these nations into "indentured servitude" and the United States must ease conditions for repayment.